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## THE PREPARATORY COURSE IN LATIN<sup>1</sup>

WHAT should be the aim of a college preparatory course in Latin? In brief the answer would be: to give the student such a grasp of the language as to enable him to take the graded courses of the college curriculum with a feeling of constantly increasing confidence and mastery of the subject as he advances to more and more difficult ground; and to cultivate in him a taste for literature which will be developed more fully in his college course. The field of the college courses in Latin includes the study of (1) the language itself, its accidence and syntax; (2) the history of the language, the formation and derivation of words, their interrelation and relation to words in other languages; (3) the metrical structure of Latin poetry, the study of which involves also the study of the principles of quantity and prosody; and (4) the literature contained in the language, whether considered from the standpoint of the individual author, or the period, or the topic. Such a programme involves, besides work of a purely literary character, a study of classical history, biography, and geography.

It is to prepare for work along these lines of study that the college preparatory course should shape itself. It is true that in the college courses themselves, if they are carefully graded, each course is a direct preparation for the next. And yet the student should come into college well equipped in an elementary way in each of the subdivisions of the study just mentioned; in other words, he should have acquired through his preparatory studies such a mastery over the language as to give him power to work in it and with it with ease and pleasure.

By this power is meant especially not the power to decline nouns, conjugate verbs, and repeat rules of syntax, but the power

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to use the knowledge implied in all these, that is, the power to read the language. Bringing this idea into prominence does not minify but magnifies the other objects of study. For the power to read implies reading with accuracy; and this requires a thorough knowledge of form and syntax, by means of which the thought relations are shown. The reading should be with ease and speed, which involves a large and ever-increasing vocabulary, most easily gained through the study of word formation and derivation; it should be with full intelligence, which involves an understanding of the historical setting of the passages under consideration; and, finally, this reading should be with æsthetic pleasure, which comes only through the careful cultivation of a literary taste and appreciation of those finer elements which make literature out of language. To the acquisition of such power as this there is no short or easy road. For it are required much time, zeal, and patience, on the part of the pupil and teacher, and the employment of the most rational and enlightened methods. No mere rote-learning or rote-teaching will suffice. The teacher should teach out of the fullness of a large and rich preparation, knowing his subject far in advance of his teaching. He should be himself always a student, continually entering new fields, especially in his own department, in order to enlarge his own horizon and to keep in sympathy with his own students. The ideal teacher will teach as one having authority, the authority not of others, but of his own discoveries. He will be himself the embodiment of the high and broad scholarship which he desires his pupils to attain.

The time necessary for the attainment of a ready knowledge of Latin will vary with different students and with different methods and surroundings. But the consensus of opinion among educators, confirmed by the practice of the best schools, has established four years as the minimum length of the preparatory Latin course, and the tendency is to increase rather than diminish this period of preparation by beginning Latin in the last year of the grammar school.

The university has not hitherto attempted to outline any

Latin course preparatory to its examinations for admission, nor to suggest the amount of Latin in the several authors that should be covered by the student. It has been content to state the general scope of each of the five examinations which it offers each quarter. Its only stipulation has been, so far as its examinations are concerned, that the student should show an ability to read at sight easy Latin prose and poetry, and to render into Latin a connected passage of simple idiomatic English. But the college has a right to expect from the preparatory school far more in the way of training than can possibly be touched upon, and much more than can be adequately tested in an examination. For this reason, and in response to repeated requests from different schools, an attempt will here be made to outline at some length the amount and character of the work for each year of a four years' preparatory course.

#### THE WORK OF THE FIRST YEAR

The young student's progress at the beginning of the study of Latin will depend much upon his previous training in language, and it is greatly to be desired that he shall have gained through the study of English at least the various technical language terms and ideas, such as the different parts of speech, what a sentence is, the various elements in a sentence, necessary agreement between these, etc. Whether or not the student has already mastered these ideas, the teacher should take little for granted at first, and should present these technical concepts with the utmost simplicity and care, with frequent repetition and illustration. Experience, even with college students, shows that the learner is often unconscious of the fact that he has not finished a sentence, and leaves the thought hanging in the air. This grave fault, so hard to remove from the adult student, can be easily prevented if the child from the first is trained to *feel* the various sentence relations, and to know when the full thought has been expressed. He ought never to consult an abstract principle before expressing the subject of a finite verb in the nominative case. He should be so accustomed to this

through constant training from the first that he would feel a distinct shock if by chance any other case form should be presented in this relation. If this subconscious knowledge of sentence relation is ever to be attained the student must from the first study sentences, and words as found in sentences, and not isolated words or phrases. In this way, that is, from a study of the actual Latin sentence, the student should get his first knowledge of all the details of the language—the case forms, the gender endings, the adjectival, pronominal, adverbial, and verbal forms, together with the various thought relations which these forms indicate. It is well to learn paradigms, to formulate principles of syntax, and even to make these abstract principles matter for drill, but these forms and principles, which have no reason whatever for existence except as they enter into the expression of thought, should never be presented to the student in the first instance except as they are illustrated in the concrete sentence. In this way the student not only learns, for example, a case form, but learns at the same time the *sentence meaning*, or the meaning in the sentence of that form. And ever afterwards the principle illustrated in this example will be to him a real rather than a conventional thing.

Besides these ideas of word relations, the problem before the student is to learn words themselves. This is of the greatest importance. For students often find themselves unable to read Latin with ease, not because they do not understand the *structure* of the language, but because they do not have a sufficient vocabulary to enable them to understand even ordinary Latin. In order to attain this vocabulary the student should from the beginning be urged to master and make his own all the words which he meets in the text that he is studying, and he should be taught some of the best methods for accomplishing this end. He should be led to see how close a relation exists between many Latin words and English words, and at the same time should be warned that many Latin words do not have the same meaning that the corresponding English words have; and that in many forms of expression Latin and English do not agree.

This fact should give the study and comparison of idioms early prominence. In connection with the discussion of this subject of vocabulary, one grave fault of some text-books should be mentioned in passing: that of introducing into illustrative sentences words which are either not classical at all, or at least are not used in the authors which the student is to read early in his course. It is poor economy of time and effort, to say the least, to have the student learn such words as "Samuel," "Edith," "rose," "doll," "cat," etc. If the object of the study of Latin is the ability to read the classical authors, surely a strictly classical vocabulary should be used from the first.

When should the student begin to translate Latin? If the power to read Latin may properly be considered as the main object of the study, it follows that the reading or translation should begin with the first lesson. This must of course, at the start, be simple Latin, but it should be real, classical Latin and not made-up, modern Latin, entirely removed from the thought and spirit of the times when Latin was a living language. What a real translation is should be early understood. It is not merely a transfer of words or language, but of *thought*; it is the expression of thought, originally stated in one language, in terms of another. Hence Latin-English should never be allowed in a translation, but such terms in English should be found as shall perfectly convey the thought in the original Latin to the English mind. As has already been said, the proper object of study is the complete sentence. It should be considered, so far as possible, as a unit, and comprehended as such. While it is necessary to recognize the several parts or elements of the sentence in order to understand the way in which the sentence is put together, still this analysis should be made as informal as possible rather than given the most prominent place in the study. If such sentence analysis is made too prominent, if the mind is concentrated on the *anatomy* of the sentence, picking out the subject, predicate, and various modifiers of each before any attempt is made to grasp the thought of the sentence, the chances are that much of the thought will be lost. The *sentence* thought is

not complete until the sentence is complete; but the various concepts which go to make up the whole thought may be grasped as they are presented one by one in the sentence, and understood by the translator. And so the sentence thought gradually unfolds itself to him just as it did to the Roman himself. It follows that the Latin *phrase* order at least, if not the Latin *word* order, as a method of translation is much preferred to to be the sentence-analysis method.

Much may be said in favor of not translating at all, but grasping the thought directly from the Latin without the intervention of English words. This is certainly possible if the student is early accustomed to do it. To this end much practice in reading aloud should be had, both in the class room and in the study. This should not be a mere pronunciation of the Latin words; the passage should be read with the use of all those devices of vocal inflection, emphasis, and pauses which serve to indicate thought in *any* real *reading*.

While this method of reading Latin would meet the main object of the study as suggested above, *i. e.*, the *power to read*, still, if this alone were pursued, certain valuable subsidiary ends which are to be gained only by translation would be lost. Some of these are the mental drill acquired by a linguistic study which requires careful observation, perception of fine shades of meaning and of word relation, together with the exercise of a nice judgment in deciding between different syntactic possibilities. Translation, in the second place, leads, as almost no other agent does, to the enlargement of one's English vocabulary and the perfecting of one's English style.

In consideration of these values, translation is recommended as the ordinary practice, while the frequent reading and hearing of Latin are recognized as most valuable assistance to this

So much has been said of translation in the first year's work because it is here above all that wise methods must be adopted. The habits of study in any subject which the student acquires in his first year are very apt to follow him throughout his course, and no amount of excellent teaching in his later years can

entirely remove the bad effect of wrong methods here. And at the same time all that is said here as to methods of translation applies with equal force to the work of the later years.

Sight reading, or the power to read Latin at sight, upon which so much stress has rightly been laid in recent years, has been in mind as the aim in all that has been said above. While especially prepared work and review work must be given a large place both in the study and in the class room, still these, if rightly considered, are only a means to an end, and every such exercise should be looked upon as one more step toward a more perfect acquisition of the power to use the language without previous careful study. Frequent if not daily tests of this power should be made by giving the student some passage to read which he has not already studied. It is *practice* only, and practice from the start, that can produce the desired result.

If translation should be one of the earliest activities of the young student of a foreign language, certainly the same should be said of composition, or the expression in the foreign language of thought which has already been expressed in the mother tongue. In German and English schools, if one may judge from the very great prominence given to this part of the work, the study of Latin composition is almost an end in itself. Without so exalting it, however, we certainly hold it to be true that there is no better exercise than this for producing in the student an accurate knowledge of words, forms, and syntactic principles, together with fluency in the use of these. It is by this means that the drill on forms and principles should be conducted. Instead of a drill upon paradigms, which amounts too often to a glib repetition of words without a thought of their real meaning, the student should be required to compose Latin sentences which bring into use all the different word forms upon which the drill is desired. By this means accurate knowledge and practice in the use of this knowledge is gained, not only of the inflectional endings themselves, but also of the thought relations which these endings indicate as the various words combine to complete a sentence. Exercise in composition is also the best help in the



acquisition of a Latin vocabulary. As this vocabulary is most easily made up of the words found in the Latin passage which the pupil is studying, supplemented perhaps by a careful selection of related words from other sources, so the sentences for composition exercise should be made up of words selected from the daily reading, and should illustrate at the same time the syntactic principles which it is especially desired to impress upon the student's mind. Here there has been a great advance in text-book making. The writers of such books are recognizing the principle that translation and composition should be mutually helpful, and are basing the composition exercises entirely upon the text which the student is reading.

What, then, should the student know of Latin at the end of the first year of a four years' course? It is difficult to speak categorically upon such a subject, but it may safely be said that the results of the first year's study should include:

*A, as to word forms.*—(1) The inflectional endings, with nominative and stem formation of regular nouns in each of the five declensions; (2) the regular comparison of adjectives, together with such irregulars as *facilis*, *miser*, etc., and *bonus*, *malus*, *magnus*, *parvus*, and *multus*; (3) the inflection of personal, demonstrative, reflexive, possessive, and relative pronouns, with a knowledge of the difference in meaning between the demonstratives *hic*, *ille*, and *iste*, and a clear conception of the third reflexive pronoun, both personal and possessive—a weak point even with many advanced students; (4) the principles of the formation of the regular verb and of the more common irregulars in the singular and plural of all modes and tenses, together with all infinitives and participles, with the meaning of each form.

*B, as to independent or individual word meanings.*—The student's knowledge here should embrace a vocabulary of several hundred Latin words found, say, in Cæsar, or whatever other Latin author is read in the first and second years. With each substantive in this list he should be able to use a gender-revealing adjective. As a necessary help to the acquisition of a vocabulary, the meaning of the commoner derivative endings,

with their method of combining with simple stems, should be mastered.

*C, as to dependent or constructional meanings of words as they combine with other words in a sentence*—that is, the thought-conveying force of the various cases, if of substantives, and of the various modal and temporal elements of the verb. In nouns this should include only the more common uses of the oblique cases, in each of which the real or original meaning should be understood, and the others grouped so far as possible around this. In verbs the simpler modal uses should be mastered.

*D, as to the agreement of closely related words.*—(1) Of adjective with noun; (2) of pronoun with antecedent; (3) of appositive with substantive; and (4) of finite verb with subject.

In all that has been said above it is understood that in no case should the student's mind be unnecessarily burdened by any word, form, or principle which will be of no value to him in his more immediate future study; say, of the next year or two. Rare words, exceptional forms, unusual constructions may well be left to be learned as they appear in later study. But the word forms and constructions that are occurring all the time should be absolutely mastered at the end of the first year. Alas! they are sometimes not mastered at the end of the sixth year.

*E, That which should be acquired in addition to all that is mentioned in the above category, and without which all this is of little value, is the ability to use this knowledge by unconscious application in the reading of easy Latin prose.* Perhaps it is better to say that the student should have acquired a *method* of study which will make all his succeeding work easy and pleasurable, for all the rest will be a progress along well-defined and well-used lines of thought and work.

The *amount* of Latin which the student may have read at the end of his first year is perhaps of secondary consideration, especially if he has gained the knowledge and power described above. But it is undoubtedly true that the first-year class ordinarily does not read enough Latin. If the first Latin text-book is based upon a Latin text and the daily lessons include progress

in the reading of this text, if not more than a sentence or two at a time, at least from ten to twenty pages of Cæsar or some other simple Latin may easily be covered by beginners during the course of their first year.

#### THE WORK OF THE SECOND YEAR

If the work of the first year has been accomplished along the line suggested above, there would be no perceptible change as the student enters upon the work of his second year. He will long since have been introduced to his author, in respect at least to vocabulary and style. He has learned to read Latin and is in easy control of all those ordinary forms and principles which are indispensable to progress.

But what are the facts? It is too often the case that now for the first time the student is expected to read connected Latin. Not finding the page conveniently broken up into short sentences, with printed topics at the head of each group pointing out what construction he is expected to meet, he is bewildered; he has carefully conned forms and constructions, but their use he associates with isolated sentences selected to bring out certain specified principles, and he is not prepared to meet these in the kaleidoscopic order which they assume in the longer and connected passage.

If, however, this is not the case, rapid progress may be expected at once. Here should begin a much fuller and more systematic topical study of case and mode uses, idiomatic expressions, and other points which a fuller and more accurate knowledge of the language requires, as they are developed in the reading. It should be the chief aim of the second year to fix and greatly enlarge the knowledge of the *structure* of the language, and this can best be done only by systematic work. Immense advantage is gained by making lists of illustrations of the various principles of construction that are met, so that the student can speak with the authority of first-hand knowledge of at least one author's Latinity.

It is an open question whether much else than distinctively

language study should be undertaken during the second year. If it cannot be done except to the detriment of the language study, certainly matter of a more general nature should not be introduced. And yet, with the exercise of discretion, much biographical, historical, and geographical material may be incidentally and very profitably introduced. These things, however, at least in the second year, should receive very secondary attention, and should be employed for the sake of variety and relief rather than as an end in themselves.

While Cæsar's Gallic War has almost exclusively occupied the field of the second-year Latin course, frequent objection has been raised that this is too difficult Latin for the young student; and diligent search has been made for a more suitable text, but with only indifferent success. While such books as Nepos' *Lives* and the *Viri Romæ*, so well edited in recent years, together with several books of easy Latin selections, make excellent supplementary reading, they have not proved to have that enduring nutritive quality which second-year linguistic pabulum should have. It is probable, therefore, that, notwithstanding the great objection on the score of difficulty which is very properly made, Cæsar's Gallic War will continue to hold the most prominent place in the second-year programme.

If a good start has been gained in the reading of the first year, at least four books of this commentary should be read in the second year, with large supplementary reading in the remaining books or in the authors just mentioned.

Composition should accompany translation as a daily exercise. The nature and importance of this work has no new function to serve, and the aim of this exercise should be still to drill the student in the forms and principles already acquired, to fix in his mind the new material as it is met daily, and to give him greater and greater fluency in the use of these. Longer and more complex sentences should be attempted than were admissible in the earlier study, with the intention of leading up to paragraph structure in the more advanced composition work of the following year.

Here, again, admirable text-books are at hand for the teacher's use, with graded sentences advancing from simple to more complex; not isolated, and changing the general subject with each sentence, but grouped so as to form simple paragraphs. These sentence groups have the advantage which other sentence arrangements have not, that is, the introduction of those inevitable loosely connecting particles with which the Roman used to weld the sentences of his paragraph into a compact whole. These particles, so important to the full understanding of a passage, but so difficult to master without much practice, should certainly be introduced into the Latin composition of the second year.

What distinct gain, then, should the student have made at the end of his second year?

The answer to this question has already been anticipated a few pages back in the advocacy of the topical and systematic study of the Latinity of Cæsar, so far as this includes the principles of syntax there mentioned. The subject of indirect discourse, so important in the study of all authors, and so difficult if not well mastered early in the study and once for all, is especially important for the understanding of Cæsar, and, on the other hand, many chapters of the Gallic War furnish exceptional facilities for the study of this subject. And in the principles of indirect discourse the end of the second year should find the student well versed.

#### THE WORK OF THE THIRD YEAR

If the structure of the language has been well mastered, and the student has gained some facility in the reading of Latin, the foundation has been laid for a step forward in the work, and one of a nature somewhat distinct from the work of the first two years. Heretofore, little if anything could be done in the cultivation of a literary appreciation of Latin, or the study of the Latin author from a literary or at least from a rhetorical point of view. But with the beginning of the third year this element in the study should be given some prominence.

Those who plan the preparatory Latin course in the schools differ as to the author to be selected at this point. The orations of Cicero have long held almost undisputed sway in the third year, but objection is made to this on the ground that prose has been the object of the student's study during the entire course up to this point, and that his interest needs the stimulus of a change of style. This change, the objectors say, will be found in Latin poetry, for instance, of Vergil or Ovid. Agreeing with what has just been said as to the importance of the literary element in study, they urge that a piece of Latin which has a distinct literary value should now be placed before the student. They urge also, on the ground of a better gradation, that Vergil should precede Cicero, asserting that the *Æneid* is easier than the orations.

These positions do not seem to be well taken, either in respect to greater variety, or better gradation. In the first place, while the orations of Cicero are in prose, they are so far removed from the prose of Cæsar or any simply narrative literature as to furnish abundant stimulus to the student through the element of variety. Again, there is a distinct advance over the Gallic War in the point of literary interest. Not that Cæsar is lacking in literary merit, for his strong, terse, direct style has won him just praise as a writer; but the orator has opportunity for the use of rhetorical devices which are not within the reach of the historian. And Cicero has made full use of all his oratorical privileges. These new literary models, by the very force of contrast, compel the student's interest and attention, and lead him by an easy and natural process into the study of Latin as literature and of literary devices in Latin. In Cicero we have the best product of the Roman art of rhetoric, and the student can have no better guide to the study of elegant Latin shaped to express fine thought than the man who could make the defense of poetry seem natural in a court of law.

So far as gradation is concerned some passages of the *Æneid* are undoubtedly easier than some passages of Cicero's orations; but when we take into consideration the wide differ-

ence between prose and poetic style, involving a substantially new vocabulary, new constructions allowed to poetic license, and the many new subjects of study that such a piece of literature as the *Æneid* suggests, the step from Cæsar to Vergil seems not only greater than that from Cæsar to Cicero, but so great as to seem entirely impracticable.

If it be admitted, then, that the orations of Cicero are the natural successor to the Gallic War, what should be the main feature in the Latin study of the third year? By all means the progress in the study of language structure should continue by daily observations of the living sentence and by topical analysis of constructions. If the first and second persons of the verb have not already been mastered these should now be added to the forms previously learned, since in the orations there is abundant illustration of these. But the distinct advance should be made in the direction already indicated, that is, of the study of literary prose. The different kinds of sentence should be studied—balanced, loose, periodic—and the rhetorical effect of each observed; the value in oratorical force of the rhetorical question; the manner in which Cicero constructed his paragraph, compacted and complete in thought. The student should be led to see that these are *orations*, intended not only to be spoken, but to carry conviction to the minds of the listeners. Hence the translation should also have oratorical spirit and power. If the Latin is read—as it by all means should be—it should be delivered with some oratorical effect, not merely pronounced—a task comparatively easy of accomplishment if once the student enters into the spirit of the author. The best way to lead him into the spirit is for the teacher himself to give illustrations of the kind of Latin reading here described.

And now, contrary to what was said as to historical and biographical material in connection with the work of the second year, a study of the life and times of Cicero is indispensable, not only to the right understanding of the many historical allusions, but, more important still, to the ability to enter into the spirit of the orator, the need of which has just been emphasized.

This material may, if it is deemed wise, be presented informally and incidentally, but it should none the less be clearly understood by the student.

Prose composition should be a frequent if not daily accompaniment of the reading of the text, just as in the second year. And here again, as in the study of the text, the advanced step should be in the direction of the mastery of the sentence group or paragraph; and an attempt should be made, though it will be of necessity elementary, to imitate something of Cicero's style.

Under favorable conditions, if Cicero is read throughout the year, at least the four Catilinian orations and the oration for the Manilian Law, or their equivalents, should be studied intensively, while the oration for Archias and perhaps one or two others should be read somewhat more rapidly, for practice in understanding at sight or at hearing. At least one oration should be most carefully analyzed as to thought, in order to get, not sentence or paragraph structure alone, but oration structure in the large. The best oration for this purpose is by all means the one in advocacy of the Manilian Law.

#### THE WORK OF THE FOURTH YEAR

To the majority of students in secondary schools the fourth year of Latin is the last year. For the sake of those, as well as of those also who are preparing for further study in college, the æsthetic element in Roman literature should be presented more fully than could have been attempted in the third year. The orations were true literature, but not the highest type of literature. They presented, it is true, a model for the study of what is finest in rhetorical expressions, but in the nature of the case that literary excellence which consists in beauty and variety of thought could not reach perfection in forensic discourse. Literature reaches its highest development in poetry, and it is to the poets that we must turn for material for the fourth year's study.

The choice of poets suited to students at this stage seems to lie between two only, Virgil and Ovid, and probably the great



poems of each of these will never yield to the lesser works of either, though these furnish excellent supplementary material. While these two authors are mentioned together, Vergil is the undisputed superior, and the *Æneid* will undoubtedly continue to hold the leading place which it has always held, with selections from Ovid as an important supplement.

At the outset the teacher is confronted with many different subjects for consideration and study. Since this is the student's introduction to poetry, of course the poetic form must receive attention; hence the subject of prosody must be considered. The subject of the life and times of Vergil himself is of no small importance to him who would enter upon an intensive study of this great poem. Virgil's place in the literature of his own country, his relation to and dependence upon Greek literature, his influence upon scholars and writers who have come after him—these are subjects of great importance. Some attention should be given to the epic, its characteristics, its exemplification in different literatures, a comparison of the *Æneid* with these. But the main object of study is, of course, the *Æneid* itself, its story, its poetic diction, its rhetorical perfection, its charm of thought. It is not to be supposed that all or any one of these phases of the subject can be studied in any but an elementary way by the boys and girls in the secondary school, but a taste of the best is the surest means of forming a taste for the best, and insuring further study along the same lines in later years.

Which of these many subjects for study in Vergil should be undertaken first? While opinion may differ here, it is probably wiser not to spend much time in preliminary study of the poem with its historical and literary setting, but to do as Vergil himself has done in the unfolding of his plot—plunge at once into the poem, and let the poem itself be the center around which all related material shall be grouped, and from which the literary content of the poem shall be gained.

Very early in the course, however, the poetic form should receive careful attention. This subject will be very easily

grasped if from the beginning of the study of Latin proper attention has been given to the quantity of syllables as an actual matter of pronunciation.

If, for instance, the student has learned the quantity at least of the various end elements at the same time that he learned the elements themselves, he will have very little, if any, difficulty now, so far as the principles of quantity are concerned, upon which the metrical structure in Latin rests. The work in prosody will then be very simple—the principles of elision (or slurring), hiatus, cæsure, foot substitutions, etc.; and the student will, with some practice, especially in reading the verses aloud, very soon find himself master of the dactylic hexameter. The progress in reading should at first be somewhat deliberate, until the student has become familiar with the new style, and has acquired facility in metrical reading. The year's work then might easily cover at least six books of the *Æneid* carefully read, with much rapid reading besides in Ovid or in other portions of Vergil's works.

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